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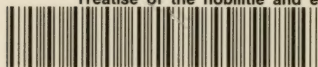
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Treatise of the nobilitie and exce



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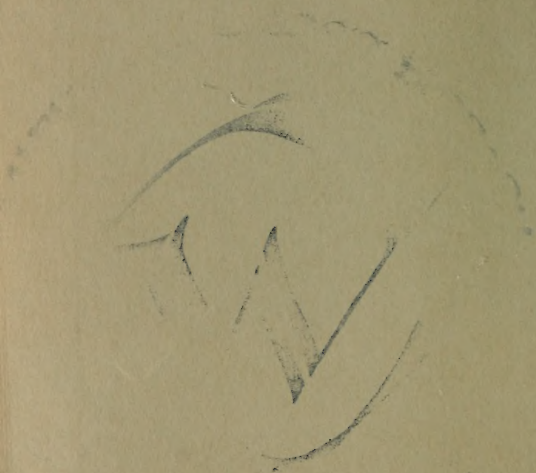
OPB

A TREATISE OF THE
MOBILITIE OF WOMAN KYNDE
1542

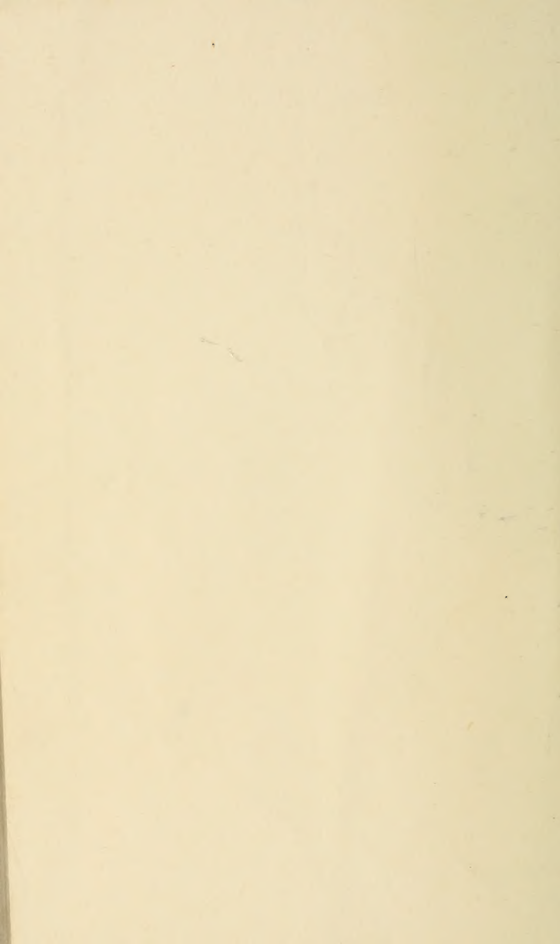
Henrie Cornelius Agrippa

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Agrippa von Nettesheim



Of the nobilitie
and excellencye
of vromankynde

OF THE NOBILITIE AND EXCELLENCIE OF WOMANKENDE.



ALMIGHTY GOD
the maker & nour-
tisher of all thyn-
ges. the Father
and goodnesse of
both male and fe-
male. of hys great beautifullnes.
hath create mankynne lyke vnto
hym selfe, he made them man and
woman. The diuersitie of which
two kyndes, standeth onely in the
sondry situation of the bodily par-
tes, in whiche the vse of generati-
on requireth a necessary differēce.
He hath given but one similitude
and lykenes of the soule, to bothe
male and female, betwene whose
soules there is no manner of diffe-

Gen. 1.

rence

tence of kynde. The woman hath
that same mynde that a man hath,
that same reason and speche, she
goeth to the same ende of blissful-
nes, where shall be noo exception
of kynde. For after the euangele-
callye truth, they that lyfe in theyr
owne proper kynde, shall not vse
the offyce of theyr kynde, but the
lykenes of angelles is promysed
vnto theym. And thus betwene
man and woman by substance of
the soule, one hath no higher pre-
emynence of nobyltye aboue the
other, but both of them natural-
ly haue equall libertie of dignitie
and worthynesse. But all other
thynges, the which be in man, be-
sydes the dyuine substance of the
soule, in those thynges the excel-
lente and noble womanhood in a
manner insynptely dothe excell the
males

Luc. 10.
Marc. 12.
Mat. 22.

rude grosse kynd of men, the whiche
 che thyng we shall playnly proue
 to be true, not with counterfayte
 and fayne flatterynge wordes, nor
 also with the subtyll sophismes of
 Logike, wherewith many sophis-
 tics were wont to blynde and de-
 cepe men, but by the auctorytpe
 of moſte excellent auctours, and
 true wyters of hystories, and with
 manifest reasons, yea with the te-
 stimonies of holye ſcripture, and
 by the ordynances and constitu-
 tions of lawes.

¶ To enter into this matter
 the womā is made ſo muche more
 excellent than man, in howe mo-
 che the name that ſhe hath recey-
 ued, is more excellent than hye.
 For Adam ſoundeth Erthe, but
 Eva is interpretate lyfe: and as
 moche as the lyfe doth excel erth.

so moche the woman is to be preferred aboue the man. For there is no cause why this shulde be called a feble argumēt, to gyue iugement of thynges by the names.

For we knowe, that the hyghe artycr and maker of thynges and names, fyrst dyd knowe the thynges, before he named them, which for as moch as he could not be decepted, for thys purpose he made the names, that it myght expresse the nature, pꝛopertie, and vse of the thyng. For the trouthe of antique names is suche, as the veraye Romanayne lawes testyfy, that the selfe names are consonāt to the thynges, and manifest significations of them. Therefore an argument of the names of thynges amonges dyuynes and lawpꝛes, is of greate weyghte. As we rede

Wꝛt.

written of Nabal, after his name
 is a sole, and folymenes is with
 him. Of this Paule in his Epi-
 stle to the Hebrewes, purposynge Hebr. xij
 to shewe the excellency of Chryste
 vseth this argument, sayeng: that
 he is made as much more excellēt
 than the aungels, as he hath enhe-
 rited a name more excellent than
 they. And in an other place, God
 hath gyuen hym a name, the whiche Phil. ii
 is aboue al names, that in the
 name of Iesu, euery knee shall
 bowe both of thynges in heauen,
 of thynges vpon earth & of thynges
 vnder the earth. Further (this
 thyng to approue) there is no
 smal strengthe of lawes, compre-
 hended and contayned in the bon-
 des of wordes, in signification of
 wordes, in conditions and demon-
 strations, in conditions annexed,

A.iii.

and

MOBILITIE OF

and suche other kyndes of dysputations, and highe poyntes, and tytles of the lawe, as in the same tytles, and other lyke, a man may perceyue. For soo we make argumente and reasons in the lawe of the interpretation of the name, also of the strength of the word and vocable. Moreover, of the interpretation of the name, and also of the dyspnytion, and composition and order of the worde. For the lawes them selves do quykelye and sharpely consyder the significations of the names, that of the they myghte some thynge interpretate.

Cypri. de
montibus
Syna et
Syon.

¶ Also Cyprian againste the Jewes argueth, that the fyrste man, Adam, receyved hys name of the iii. principall partes of the world, that is, East, West, North, and South

Woulde, and in the same booke he
dothe expound the same name, A-
dam, because erthly was made flesh,
althoughe suche exposition dothe
differ from the tradition and tea-
ching of Moyses, sens among the
Hebrewes it is not wyrtten with
foure but with. iii. letters. yet for
all that, this exposition in so holy
a man is not to be dyspraysed, for
as moche as he was not lerned in
the Hebrew tongue, the whiche
verie many saynctes and expoly-
tours of holpe scrypture, to theyr
small blame knewe not. But if I
can not haue lyke leaue and liber-
tye for the praysse of womanheed,
after my mynde and iugement, to
vse lyke etymologie and declara-
tion of the word and name of eue,
at the leaste lette me be suffered to
speake this one thyng out of the
A. v. with

NOBILITIE OF

mysticall Decrees, and agreeable
 wylls of the Cabalists, the very
 name of a woman to haue more
 affinitie with the ineffable and in-
 enarrable name of the Diuine po-
 wer almyghtye, called Tetragrama-
 maton, than the name of man, the
 whiche with the name of god, nei-
 ther in letters noz in figure, noz in
 nombre both agree.

¶ But now we wylle leaue these
 thynges, for they be redde of few,
 and of fewer vnderstande & they
 requyre a longer processe than is
 mete to be spoken of here. In the
 meane season, we wol serche oute
 the excellencie of womanhed, not
 of the name onely, but of the very
 thynges, dueties, and merites.

¶ Therfor let vs (as they say) serch
 the scriptures and take vng our
 groundes at the fyrste creation, let

vs

As dispute and reason, what dignitie woman obteyned aboue mā, whanne she was fyrste made. We knowe, that whatso euer god almyghty made, do chiefly differre in this point, that certayne of them shuld abyde and remaine for euer more incorruptible and withoute putrefaction, and certayne shuld be subiecte vnto corruption, mutabilitie and change. And in creatinge those thynges, god proceeded forwarde, after this order he beganne at the more noble and excellent of one thyng, and ended at the most noble of an other. And thus he created incorruptible angels and soules: for so doth saint Augustyne dispute & reason, that the soules of our fyrste parentes, were created with angels, before the bodies were made. Further-
more

Aug. sup.
Gen. li. 7.

NOBILITIE OF

more he created incorruptible bodies, as the heuē, the sterres and the elementes incorruptible, but subiecte to dyuers mutations: of the whiche he made al other thinges that be subiecte vnto corruption. From the more byler by seuerall degees and orders of dignitie, agayne ascendynge and goinge vp vnto the perfection of the hole worlde. Firste he made minerals: thanne thynges begetable plantes and trees: after that thinges lyuinges, than byrte beastes, some creppynge, some swymmyng, some fleyng. Fynally he created two creatures lyke to hym selve, fyrst the male, and last the female: in whiche female, the heueng, the erthe, and al the goodly ornamēt of the same, were perfected and fully finished. For the maker com
myng

myng to the creation of woman;
rested at her, as haupnge befoze
his handes nothyng moze hono-
rable to be made, and in her al the
wisedome and power of the crea-
toz came to conclusion and ende:
after the which there can no crea-
ture be found oꝝ imagined. Than
seing a woman is the last of crea-
tures, the full ende, mozte perfect
of all goddis woꝝkes, and of the
same the very perfection: who wol
deny a woman to be the most woꝝ-
thy & mozte excellent of all creatu-
res without whom y very world,
nowe beyng fynished, and in all
thynges mozte perfectly accom-
plyshed, shulde haue ben vnper-
fecte, the whiche coude none other
wyse be perfyted, thanne with the
mooste perfectest of al creatures.
Foꝝ it were ageynst reason and a
thyng

NOBILITIE OF

thyng, vnseemely to thynke, that
 god wold finish so gret a worke in
 any vnperfect thing. But bicause
 the world it selfe, as the absolute,
 hoie, and most perfect cyrle, was
 created of god, the same cyrle
 must nedes be ended in that lyttel
 parte, whiche myghre couple and
 toyne within it selfe the fyrste of
 all thynges with the laste of all
 thynges with one knotte. So a
 woman, tohanne the worlde was
 made, was the laste in tyme, and
 laste made: and the same woman
 partly in auctoritey, but chesely in
 dignitie, was the fyrste of all thin-
 ges, conceived in the mynde of
 god as it is wyrtten of her by the
 prophete: Befoze the heuens were
 made, god dyd chose her, and he
 chose her, befoze all other creatu-
 res. For this is a common con-
 clusion

clusion among philosophers (if I
maye vse theyr wordes) The ende
alway is in the fyrst entetion, and
in the dede is the laste. So a wo-
man was the laste worke of god,
formed into thys world as quene
of the same, into her prepared pa-
layce, garnyshe with all pleasu-
res plentyfully. Therfore euerie
creature worthely loueth reueren-
ceth & serueth her, and worthly
is subiect, and obeyeth vnto her,
which is of al creatures the abso-
lute quene, ende, perfeccion, & glo-
ry by al wayes and meanes. Where-
fore the wyse man saythe, who so
hath god with him, reioyseth, and
in harte comendeth the gentil na-
ture of woman, ye and the lord of
all thynges hym selfe loueth her.
¶ By reason of the place also, in
whiche the woman was created,
howe

Arist. vl.
de auditu

Sapi. 8.

NOBILITIE OF

howe farre the passeth man in noblenesse, holy wyfte both witness vnto vs mooste plentifullye. For where the woman was made in Paradyse, a place mooste noble and pleasaunt, amonge aungels: the man was made withoute Paradyse, in the wyelde fyelde amonge brute bestes. Afterward, to thintent, that woman shuld be created, he was brought into Paradyse. And therefore the woman, endowed with the peculyar gyfte of Nature, as she were accustomed to be in the hyghest place of her creatiō, though she lokie down ward from neuer so high a place, yet she neyther suffreth nor feleth any whirling or swimming in her heed, ne her eies dasyll not, like as it is wonte to chaunce to men.

Furthermore, if it chance a woman

man to be in lyke peryll of drow-
nyng with a man, she without a-
ny outwarde helpe, swymmeth a
losse longer than the man, whiche
soner synketh, and goth downe to
the boottom.

¶ And that the dygnytie of the
place maketh moche to the noby-
litie of manne, the ciuill lawe and
humaine constitutions do playn-
ly affirme, and the custome of all
nations doth chye fly obserue this
thyng, not onely in men, but al-
so in other beastes, yea and in the
estimation of thynges hauyng no
lyfe: For the more worthye place,
that any thing is born or brought
vp in, the more noble it is iudged.
wherfore Isaac commanded his
sonne Jacob, that he shoulde not
take a wyfe of the lande of Cana-
an, but of Mesopotamie in Sy-
ria,

NOBILITIE OF

eta, beyng of better estymation.
 And vnto this, is not inoche vn-
 lyke, whiche is spoken in the gos-
 pell of Iohn, where Philip said :
 we haue founde Iesus the sonne
 of Ioseph of Nazareth. And Ma-
 thanael said to hym : what good
 can come oute of Nazareth ? But
 now let vs speke of other matters
 ¶ A woman doth passe a man in
 the materiall substance of her cre-
 ation. For she was not made of a
 ny creature wantyng lyfe & soule,
 or of the vyle clay or dytte, as the
 man was, but of a matter purifi-
 ed and lyuely, hauyng a reasona-
 ble soule, and a godly minde. Fur-
 thermore, god made manne of the
 erthe, whiche naturally byrgeth
 forth the all kyndes of beastes and
 lyuely creatures, by the working
 together of the heuenly influences;
 but

But the woman, aboue al heuently
influence and promptnes of na-
ture, and without any other ope-
ration & power, was onely made
of god, full stedfast and perfite in
all thinges, the man in the meane
season losynge one of his rybbes,
of the whiche she was made, that
is to say, Eue of Adam sleeping, and
that so soundly, that he could not
fele his ribbe plucked away. And
thus, man is the worke of nature,
and womanne the worke of god.
And therfore the woman is many
tymes more apt and mete then the
man, to receyue the heuently light
and byghtnes, and is ofte reple-
nished therewith: whiche thyng is
easy to be sene, by her cleynesse,
& marueylous faire beautye. For
seyng that beaultie it selfe is none
other thyng, but the clere bright-

NOBILITIE OF
nes of goddes visage naturallye
sette in thinges, ryght fayre shy-
nyng in the beautifull bodies of
creatures: he therfore hath chosen
women before men, to be far more
endowed, and moſte abundantly
replenished therewith. The propre
body of a woman in syght and fea-
lyng, is moſte delicate and plea-
ſant: her fleſhe ſofte and tender:
her colour faire and clere: her ſkin
ſofte and ſylke, her head comelye,
and decked with heare ſofte lyke
ſylke, long, and ſhynnyng lyke the
golde wyre: her countenaunce ſo-
brye: her loke and chere merre and
pleaſaunt: her face moſte fayre of
all creatures, her necke white as
milke: her ſould large and high:
her eyes rolling and ſhynnyng like
cristall, her eye amiable gladſome
and gracious: her browes aboue
them.

them, wel sette togyther in propre
 thyn circles, with a comely playn-
 nesse, deuided equally with a feate
 Distauce, betwene the which, out
 of the middelt, discendeth the nose
 straghte and treatise: vnder the
 which is her ruddy mouth, with
 soft and tender lypes, ful propre-
 ly proportioned: within the whi-
 che, whan she smileth, her teeth
 do shyne forth, beinge but lyttell
 ones, and sette in egall order, as
 white as the yuooy, and not so ma-
 ny in numbꝛe as a man hath, for
 she is nother greatte eater, bytar,
 nor gnawer: And rounde aboute
 them lyse vp her lawes, & cheekes,
 with tender softnes, as ruddy as
 rose, and replenished with Cham-
 fastnes: her chynne rounde, with
 a prett ppytherin. Under this she
 hath a small necke, somewhat long

NOBILITIE OF

and streighte vpryght frome her
 rounde Shulders, with a delycate
 wescande, whytely, and meauyle
 thicke and bigge: her voyce smal
 and thylle: her speche lowe and
 swete: her bzeaste brode and well
 sette out, clothed with euen fleshe
 and hardnes of her pappes, whi-
 che are round and euen as her be-
 ly is: her sydes are softe and ten-
 der: her backe playn and streyght
 her armes long and ful: her han-
 des white and softe, with fingers
 longe and small, stretched forth a
 length from the ioyntes, and pro-
 pely set and knytte to gither: her
 hyppes, thyres, and legges, well
 brawned fleshy and full: her fin-
 gers endes and toos are propre &
 rounde, lyke a lyttel circle, and al
 the partes of her body well furni-
 shed with humour. More ouer,
 her

her pace and going is right comely: her mouynge honest: her port and chere very comendable: and in the order of al the body, in Chap figure pproportion and disposition aboue al other she is farre the fairest creature. In al the hole heape of creatures, there is noo thyng so wonderfull to see, ne noo miracle so maruapulouse to beholde. In so moche, that there is no man, excepte he be slacke blynde, but he maye see, that god hym selfe confessed and heaped together in woman, what so euer was beautiful in all the holle world: which causeth every creature to be astryed and amased at her: yea and many wayes they louen and worshippe her: in so moche that we se it chance ofte tymes, that the bodiles spiritues and diuels are ardently taken

B.iii.

and

and rauyshed with the beautie of
women, out of al measure: which
opinion is not false, but the truth
by many experyences is notablie
knownen. And to passe ouer those
thynges, that the poetes haue left
to vs in wrytynge, of the loue of
the goddes, and of theyr louers &
concubines, as of Apollo, Daph-
nes, Neptuneus, Salmones, Her-
cules, Hebe, Iole, Omphale, and
of the other goddis louers, ye and
many of Jupiters him self: This
gyfte of beaute so diuine, so belo-
ued of god and man, holye wrytte
in many places doth hyghly com-
mende and prayse, aboue al other
gyftes and qualities. For it is reb
in Genesis, That the chyldren of
god, seinge the daughters of men
that they were faire, did chose and
toke vnto theyn wyues, suche as
they

they liked. we rede also of Sara, the wyfe of Abraham, that she was fayre, yea the fairest of al women on the erthe. Soo whan the seruant of Abraham, had sene Rebecca, a maide of excellēt beaurye, he said secretly to hym selfe, This is she, whiche god hath prepared for Isaac the sonne of Abraham. And Abigail, the wyfe of the wicked churle Naball, was prudente wyfe and fayre: wherby she saued the life and goodes of her husbād from the furye of kynge Dauid. and the puell man was saued by the fayre woman, for Dauid sayd to her these wordes: Go peasably into thy house: loo, I haue harde thy voyce, and honoured thy face. For seynge that all beautie is, eyther spirituall, vocal, or corporal. Abigail was all fayre, in pruden-

NOBILITIE OF

cy of spirite, in eloquence of spech,
and beautie of body : whiche cau-
sed Dauid, after the dethe of Na-
ball her husbände, to take her to
his wyfe. And Bathsaba, was a
womanne of so excellent beautie,
that Dauid, beinge rauished and
taken with her loue, after the deth
of her husband, exalted her aboue
all other, to be his wyfe & queene.
Also Abisag, a Sunamite, by rea-
son she was a mayden most faire,
was chosen out, to lye with kyng
Dauid, waxinge very olde, to re-
store his naturall hete. wherfore
the aged kynges wyll was, high-
ly to aduance her in honour. And
also after the dethe of this migh-
ty kyng, she was enterteyned as
a queene. We rede of the excellent
beautie of queene Masi. and also
of Hester, which was preferrid be-
fore

Reg. ii.

Reg. i.

1. 2.
Hester. i.

foze the other, bycause she was
moze goodlye and fayze of face.
we rede of Judith, whose fayze- Iu. 8. et. 10.
nesse god so moche encreased, that
all that behelde her, were wonder-
fully amased. And shozely to speke Dan. 13.
we rede that Susanna was ve-
ry delycate goodly and beautiful.
we rede also, that after Jobs dy- Iob vii. in
uers temptations, vexations, and fine.
grecuous troubles synned, besy-
des all other thynges, whiche his
gret patience deserued, god gaue
vnto hym three daughters fayze
than the three Charites, yea there
were found no where so fayze wo-
men. Shoz ouer, we maye rede
hystories of holy byrgins, doubt-
les to our gret wonder, howe far,
howe beautyfull they were aboue
al other the childre of men, whose
laude and prayse the catholyke
churche

NOBILITIE OF

churche dothe solempnely syng:
but specially the prayse of the im-
maculate and vndefiled princesse,
the mother of god, the virgin Ma-
rie: whose fayre beautie the sonne
and moone wōder at, from whose
moste fayre visage, so great clere-
nes of beautie, with chastitie and
holynes dyd shyne, that although
she moued the myndes, and lyke-
wysse the eies of all men, yet for al
that, no mortall man at any tyme,
was allured or inticed by her beau-
tie, ones to thynke amysse.

¶ Those thynges (all thoughe
some what at lengthe) I haue re-
herfed vnto you, and that almost
the very selfe same wordes out of
holy scripture, where mention of
beautie is so ofte made: to the in-
tent we shulde playnely perceyue,
that the beautie of women is not
onely

onely among men, but also of god
hyghly esteemed and honoured.

In an other place of holy scrip Num. 31.
ture we lyke wyse rede, that god
commanded all the men, and men
childzen, to be slayne: but the faire
women to be saued. In the booke Deut. 21.
of Deuteronomy it was perimpt-
ted to the chylzen of Israell, eche
to chose hyin a fayre womanne to
wyfe, of those that were taken pry-
soners.

And besydes this wouderfull
beautie, woman is endowed with
a certaine dignitie and worthines
of honestie, whiche is not gyuen
to man: for the heare of her head
hangeth downe soo lowe, that yt
wyl couer and hyde all the pryuy
partes of her body. Farther, it is
not nedefull for a woman, to han-
dle these partes of her body, in the
wozkes

NOBILITIE OF

workes of Nature, whiche man
customably vseth to doo. Finally
Nature hath so wondrously
wrought for the comelynes of wo
man, that her priue partes are not
so apparant as mans, but sit in a
place moze secretely. And nature
hath gyuen moze shames to
woman than to man. Wherfore it
hath ofte chanced, that a woman,
greuouely dyseased in her priue
partes, hath chosen rather to dye,
than to abyde the syght and hand
lynge of the surgian, to be cured
and healed. And this shamesfast
honestie they obserue and kepe,
both in dyenge, and after they be
dead: as it appereth by them that
be drowned. For as Plinie and ex
perience witnesse, a woman ly
eth grouelyng whan she is deade
by the fauour that nature bereth
to her

to her Chamefaste honestie: but a man swymmeth vpryghte on his backe. Farther, the most worthy part of man, wherby we chiefly differre from other brute beastes, and doo representer the dyuine nature, is the heade, and in it chiefly the countinaunce. Truly a mans heade is deformed with baldnes, and contrary, a womanne by the great pryuilege of nature, is not bald. Moreover, the countinaunce and face of man is (by the bearde to hym hateful) so oft defiled and hyd with filthie heares, that scarce from brute beastes he may be discerned, in woman contrary wise, the face doth alway remayn pure and comely. Wherfore it was decreed in the law of the .xii. tables, that women shuld not scrape nor shawe theyr chekes, leaste at any
time

NOBILITIE OF

tyme the bearde shuld growe out,
 and chaine fastenes be hyd. Alsoo
 of the clenness and puritie of wo-
 man, this maye be to all men the
 moste euydent argumente and to-
 ken: That a woman ones washed
 cleane ouer, as ofte as she is was-
 shed afterwarde in cleane water,
 that water receyueth no spotte of
 vncleannesse: but a man, be he ne-
 uer so cleane washed, as ofte as he
 washethe agayne, troubleth and
 fouleth the water. Furthermoze,
 Nature hath so ordeyned, that wo-
 men auoid superfluous humours
 by secreete partes, that men auoide
 by the face, the moste worthy part
 of mannes body. And where it is
 graunted to man aboue all other
 beastes to haue the face and con-
 tinuance lokynge vppre to heuen:
 Nature and fortune haue prouy-
 ded

ded so wonderly for woman, and shewed so great fauor, that if she chaunce to fall, she seldome or neuer falleth on her head or face.

¶ Shall we ouer passe, the pre-ferment of nature to woman a-boue man, in the procreation of mankynde & whyche thyng is thus very well perceyued. For on-ly the womans seede (as wytnes- sen Galen and Auicenn) is the mat-ter and nourishment of the chyld, and not the mans, whiche is but an accident to the substance. For as the lawe sayth, the greatest & chiefest offyce and duetye of wo-man, is to conceyue, and to saue that is conceyued. For which cō- sideration we se very many to be lyke theyr mothers, by reason they be begotten of their bloudd: and this lykenes is very oft well per-
C cep

Galē. 2. de
Sparmate
& 14. de v
tilitate par
ticularum.
Aui doc. 5
Fen. 1. pri-
mi.

NOBILITIE OF

ceptued in the proportion and ma-
 kyng of their bodyes, but it is al-
 wayes in their manners. For if the
 mothers be foolyshe, the chyl dren
 proue foolyshe also. If the mo-
 thers be wyse, the chyl dren shall
 haue a sent thereof. But contra-
 ry wyse it is in the fathers. For
 though they be wyse, yet manye
 tymes they gette folyshe chyl dren.
 and foolyshe fathers gette wyse
 chyl dren, so that the mothers be
 wyse. And there is none other re-
 son, why mothers more than the
 fathers, shuld loue theyr chyl dren,
 but that the mothers perceiue,
 that theyr chyl dren haue, and soo
 they haue in bede, in theym more
 of theyr mothers substance, than
 of theyr fathers. For this cause,
 that I haue shewed you: I sup-
 pose it naturally grafte in vs, to
 be

be moze kynde and louyng to our mothers, than to our fathers. It is so moch, that we seme to loue our father meanely, and to loue our mother hartelye. And for this cause, Nature hath gyuen vnto women, milk of so great strength and vertue, that it not onely nourisheth infantes and babes, but also restoreth such as are brought lowe by sycknes, and is a sufficient foode, to preserve the lyfe of those, that are of perfecte age.

As we rede an example in Valerius Maximus, of a certain yong woman, whiche with the mylk of her brestes nourished her mother in prison, that otherwyse shoulde haue famished for hunger. For the whiche pietifull dede, her mother was deliuered out of prison, and vnto them hath a perpetual

Val. li. 5.
cap. 4.

NOBILITIE OF

lyuyng was gyuen. And of that
pyslon, they made a Temple, and
called it, The temple of Pitye.

TIt is well knowen, that for the
more parte, a woman hath alway
more pite and mercy than a man.
Whiche thyng Aristotle doth at-
tribute to womākynd, as a thing
appropried therevnto. Wherefore
Salomon sayth: Where as is no
woman, there the sycke man wai-
leth: eyther bycause, that in ser-
uyng and helpynge the sicke, she
is full diligent, oz els by reason of
her mery chere, she is full comfort-
able: oz els bycause that womā's
mylke is the chiefe and principall
reliefe for such as be feble & weke,
yea beynge broughte to deathes
dooze, they are therby restored &
geyne vnto helthe. And the phisi-
tians say: That the heat of a wo-
mans

Arist. de a-
nima.

Eccle. 36.

mans breaſtes and pappes, layde
and toynd to the breaſtis of feble
olde men, conſumed away by age.
ſpyreth vp encreaſeth, and con-
ſerueth in them lyuely heate.

Whyche thyng was well knowne
to Dauid, that in his olde age
choſe the mayden Abiſag, a Su-
namite, with her collynges & clip-
pings to hete & kepe him warme.
Alſo woman is rather redye and
more prompt to the holy offyce of
generation, than man, as it is wel
knowne.

C Further it is a wonderful my-
racle of Nature, that a womanne
bredynge chylde, ſore longynge for
it, hath eaten rawe fleſhe, rawe
fyſhe, coles, erth, ſtones, mettals,
poypoſons, & many ſuche other lyke
thynges, which without hurt ſhe
doth digeſte, conuerte, and turne

C.iii. into

into the hollome nutrimente and substance of the body. How great myracles and maruailes, that nature hath endowd woman with, shal he fynd, that redbeth throughe by the volumes and bookes of philosophers and phisitions: whiche for presences we here ouerpasse.

T Nowe let vs speake of speche and langage, whiche is the gyfte of god, and by whiche one thing we passe and are better than all other brute beastes: Crisostomus Mercurius iudgeth it to be of as great pryce, as moch worth, and as good a thyng, as immortalitie. And Hesiodus nameth it the chiefest treasure of Mankynde. And is not a womā better spokē, more eloquent, more copious and plenteyfull of wordes than a man? Do not all we, that be men, lerne
 fyre

first to speke of our mothers, or of
our nources : Truely nature her
selfe, the former of thinges, sage-
ly prouidyng for mankynde, gaue
this gyfte to womankynde, that
scarce in any place ye shall fynde
a dumme womanne. Is it not
right faire and cōmendable, that
women shulde excelle men in that
thing, in whiche men chiefly passe
all other beastes : But from pro-
phane mattiers, lette vs retourne
home agē to holy scripture, and
begynne at the verye fountaynes
of our relygion.

¶ We know surely, that god blef-
sed man for womans sake whiche
blessynge the unworthy man de-
serued not to haue, tyll the womā
was created and made, wherwith
Salomon in his prouerbes agre-

Pro. 12.

eth : Who so fyndeth a good wo-
man

C. iiii.

NOBILITIE OF

man, syndeth a good thinge, and
 receyueth an holsome benefite of
 the lozde. And it is witten Ecclesi-
 astici. 26. Happy is the man, that
 Eccle. 26, hath a vertuous wyfe: For the
 number of his yeres shall be dou-
 ble. And no man may be compa-
 red to him in dignitie, that for his
 worthynes hath a good woman.
 Ibidem. For as Ecclesiasticus saythe: A
 good woman is a gyfte about all
 other gyftes. And therfore Salo-
 mon in his prouerbes calleth her,
 Pro. 12, the crowne of her husbände: and
 I. Cor. 11, Paul, the glozie of man. For glo-
 rie is defined to be the accomplish-
 ment and perfection of a thinge,
 resyng and delytyng in his ende:
 that is to say, when nothing moze
 may be added, to encrease or aimed
 the perfection thereof. A woman
 therfore is the ende, perfection, fe-
 licitie,

Itellie, benediction, and glozve of
the man: and as Augustin sayth:
the fyyste societie and company of
mankynde in this morall lyfe.

Wherfoze of necessitie every man
loueth her, whome who soo euer
wyl not loue, but hate, is a stran-
ger not only to all humanitie and
gentylnesse, but also to all vertue
and grace. And to speake agayne
of the Cabalisticall mysteries, **A-**
braam was blessed of god by the
woman Sarah, and takynge the
letter **H**, from the womans name
and puttynge it to the mans, cal-
led hym Abraham. Also the bles-
synge of Jacob was gotten hym,
by a woman, his mother. There
be many suche examples in holye
Scripture: but not to be shewed
in this place.

Gene. 17.

Gene. 17.
& 28.

Thus blessing was gyuen for
C.v. the

NOBILITIE OF

the woman, and law for the man:
 Gene. 2. | The lawe I say, of anger and of
 cursynge. For why, the fruyte of
 the tree was forbydden to the mā,
 but not to the woman: which was
 not than created. For god wolde
 her to be free from the begynning.
 Therfore the manne sinned in ea-
 tynge, not the woman. The man
 gaue vs deathe, not the woman.
 And all we synned in Adam, not
 in Eua. And we toke oꝝygynalle
 synne of oure father the man, not
 of our mother the woman. And
 therfore the olde law commanded
 all the malekynde to be circumci-
 sed, but the females to remayne
 vncircumcised: that is to witte, he
 ordeyned the oꝝiginal synne to be
 punyshed onely in that kind, whi-
 che had trespassed. Furthermore,
 god rebuked not the woman, for
 that

that she had eatē, but bicause she
gaue occasion of yuelle vnto the
man, and that dyd she vnwarely,
intyced therto by the dyuell. The
man knew well he dyd amisse: but
the woman being deceyued, erred
ignozantly. For she was fyrst temp
ted of the dyuell, whom he knewe
to be moſte excellent of all creatu-
res. And as Bernarde ſaith: The
dyuell, ſeing her wonderful beau-
tie, and perceyuyng her to be ſu-
che one, as he had knowen befoze
in the godly lyght, whiche aboue
all aungels, ſhoulde reioyce with
the ſpeche of god: conceived en-
uie onely ageynſt the woman for
her excellencye. Wherefoze Chriſte
bozne into this worlde moſt hum-
ble and lowe, to thende he woulde
with his great humilite make ſa-
tisfaction for the synne of pryde,
com:

NOBILITIE OF

comitted by our forfather: he toke
 vpon hym manhode, as the more
 humble and lower kynde, and not
 womankynde, the more hygher &
 noble. Furthermoze, bycause we
 were condemned for the synne of
 the man, and not of the woman,
 god wolde, that in what kynd the
 synne was committed, in the same
 shulde be the purgation of synne:
 and by the same kinde, whiche ig-
 norantly was deceyued, we shuld
 also be reuengid. Therfoze it was
 said vnto the serpent, that the wo-
 man, or more truly, the seede of the
 woman, shoulde breake his head,
 and not the man, nor the seede of
 the man. And perchaunce, hereof
 it came, that the order of prieste-
 hode is of the church rather com-
 mitted to the man, than to the wo-
 man, bycause euerye prieste dothe
 repre-

represent Chyſte, and Chyſte, the
 fyrſt man, that is to wite, the ſyn-
 ner Adam. To this purpoſe, we
 vnderſtande the Canon, that be-
 gynneth, Hec imago, whiche ſayth
 that a woman was not made to y-
 ymage of god, but to the ſimpli-
 tude of Chyſte. Yet for all that I
 ſay, that he be yuge verve god) I
 ſpeake of Chyſte (wold not be the
 ſonne of man, but of a woman,
 the whiche he ſo hyghly honored,
 that of a womanne onely he toke
 fleſhe and bloudde. For onely for
 the woman, Chyſt was called the
 ſonne of man, and not for the mā.
 ¶ This is that great myracle, at
 the whiche the prophete ſo moche
 meruayled: that a woman com-
 prehended manne, whan a virgin
 conceived mankynde, and bare
 Chyſte in her body.

Hier. 31.

Alſo

NOBILITIE OF

Ioan. 20.

Mar. 16.

Luc. 24.

Matt. 27.

Also Christe risynge by ageyn
from deth to lyfe, appered first vn
to women, not to me. And it is not
unknownen, that after the death of
Christe, men fell from the faythe:
but it was neuer knowe, that wo
men syppe and fell from Christen
fayth and religion. Farther, there
was no persecution of the faythe
at any tyme, no heresye, no errour
in the faythe, that arose and came
by women, but by menne. Christe
was boughte and solde, accused,
condemned, scourged, hanged on
the Crosse, and at the last putte to
cruell deathe onely by men. yea;
he was denyed of his owne De-
ter, forsake of his other Disciples,
and only accompanied wayted v-
pon and folowed of women vnto
the crosse and graue. Also the be-
xy wyfe of Dylate, an hethen wo-
man

man, went aboute, and laboured
 moze to saue Iesus than any mā,
 yea any of these men, that beleued
 in hym. Furthermoze almost the
 holl schoole of diuines asserme &
 say, that the churche dyd than re-
 maine only with the woman, that
 is to say, with the virgin Marye.
 And therfore womankind is woꝝ-
 thyly called relygious, deuoute,
 and holy. But yet if any man wol
 say with Aristotle, that among al
 beastes and luyng creatures, the
 male kynd is moze valiāt, strong,
 wise, and noble: Unto him, a moze
 excellent man, the great Doctour,
 the holy apostel saint Paule woll
 answer and say: Those thynges
 that be folyishe befoze the worlde,
 god hath chosen, that he myghte
 confounde wise menne: and those
 thynges that be feble and weake

Arist. de:
 anima.

1. Cor. 1.

NOBILITIE OF .

Gene. 2.

Judic. 14.
& 16.

Gene. 19.

2. Reg. 11

3. Reg. 11.

In this worlde, he hath chosen to
 confounde the mighty : & the vile
 and dispised befoze the world god
 hath chosen: yea & those thynges,
 which be nothing, & of no reputa-
 tion: that he myght destroy those
 thinges, which be in price & moch
 set by . For who amonge men, in
 all gyftes of nature and of grace
 was higher than Adam: yet a wo-
 man brought him low. Who was
 stronger than Sampson: A wo-
 man ouercame his strength. Who
 was moze chaste than Lot: A wo-
 man inticed hym to incest. Who
 was moze religious than Dauid
 A woman disturbed his holynes.
 Who was moze wyser than Sa-
 lomons: a woman deceyued hym.
 Who was moze paciēt than Job.
 Whom the dyuell stryped out of al
 his goodes, kyled all his family,
 and

and chyl dren, and filled al his bo-
dy full of boyles and soozes, and
yet for all that he coulde not pro-
uoke hym from the olde simplici-
tie of his mynde: but the woman
intyced hym (and in that she was
more hygher and constaunt than
the dyuell) and so vexed hym, that
he cursed god. And if it myght be
lesful to make any cōparison with
Chyste, who is most myghtyfull
and moste wyse, for he is the eter-
nall and euerlastyng wyse dome
and power of god: dydde he not
suffer hym selfe to be ouercome of
that pooze woman of Chanaan?
sayinge hym selfe, It is not good
to take the chyl dernes breade, and
cast it to dogges. She answered
and sayde, Trowthe lord, neuer
the lesse, the dogges eate of the
crommes, whiche fall frome their

Matt. 15.

D inai

NOBILITIE OF

masters table. Now when Christ perceyued, that he could not ouer come her with that reasonne, he blessed her, sayenge: Be it vnto the as thou desyrest.

Ioan. 18.

Matt. 20.

Marc. 14.

Luc. 22.

Who was moze hotte and feruent in the saythe of Christe, than Peter? A woman made hym, so greatte a Mystryer of Christis Church, to denye Christe.

Plaut. 8.

Lette the Canonistes crake what they wylle, that theyr Church can not erre, a woman pope mocked her by a goodlye imposture and decepte.

But nowe some men wyl say, that those thynges redounde rather to the dyspraysse than prayse of women. Vnto whome women shall make this aunswere: If it were so, that one of vs two, must nedes lose eyther goodes or lyfe.

I had

I had leauer to lose the, than to
 be losse my selfe: And that by the
 example of Innocētius the thyrd,
 whych in a certayne pisle decrea
 tall, wryten vnto a cardynall am
 bassatour, sent from the See of
 Rome, sayth: If one of vs twain
 muste nedes be confounded, I
 wold rather chose to haue the con
 founded.

Moreover, it was prouyded
 by the Cyuile lawes, that women
 might lawfully loke to their own
 profit, to other mens hinderance.
 And in holy writ, is not the iniqui
 tie of a woman praysed more then
 a mans wel doing: is not Rachel
 praysed, whiche by a proper sleight
 deceyued her father sekynge vnto
 ydols: was not Rebecca lauded,
 whych by craft gotte her sonne
 Jacob the blessing of his fathere

Gene. 31.
 Gene. 27.

D.ii. And

NOBILITIE OF

Iosuc. 2.

Judic. 4.

And afterward by polycie caused him to escape the anger of his brother. The harlotte Raab deceiued those, whych soughte for the searchers and spies of Iosuc: and it was imputed vnto her for ryghtuousnes. Jabel went out to mete Sisar, and sayde vnto hym: My lord, come into me. And askynge water, she gaue hym to drynke of the bottell of mylke, and couered hym, as he laye sleapyng. And whyle Sisara laye and slepte, she entred in pryly, & strake a nayle in his head, and slewe hym, which had put his truste in her promyse and fidelitie, to be saued. And for this notable treason, the Scripture saith: Blessed is Jabel among women, and Jabel shalbe blessed in her tabernacle.

¶ Rede the story of Iudith, and marke

marke her wordes vnto Holofer-
 nes. She said: Sye take and vnder-
 stande the wordes of thy hand
 mayde. For if thou wylte folowe
 & do after these wordes, the lorde
 shall make the perfite, and shall
 bynuge thy mattier to prosperous
 effecte. I shall come and shewe al
 thynges vnto the, so that I shall
 leade the throughe the myddes of
 Hierusalem, and thou shalt haue
 all the people of Israell, lyke as
 shepe without a shepeherde, and
 not soo moche as one dogge shall
 barke ageynst the. For those thin-
 ges are shewed me by the wisdom
 and prouidence of god. And thus
 by her flattering the stroke of Ho-
 lofernes head, as he lay and slept.
 I pray you, what wyckeddes reu-
 sell, what crueller deceptes, what
 craftier trefon could be imagined:

Pro. 12.

D.iii. And

And yet holy Scripture bleſſeth;
praiſeth, and extolleth her, and the
iniquite of the woman is reputed
farre better, than a mans wel do-
inge. But nowe lette vs retourne
to our pourpoſe.

Of the excellency of ſo happy
a kynde of women, this alſo may
be to euery man an argumēt moſt
euidēt, that the moſt excellent of
all creatures, than whiche neuer
was, nor neuer ſhalbe a more wor-
thy, I meane the moſt bleſſed vir-
gyn Marye, was conceived with-
out original ſynne: and ſhe was
not inferiour to Chriſte, touching
his humanitie.

This is a ſtronge argumente
of Ariſtotle: Of what kynde the
beſt is nobler thanne the beſte of
an other kynde, that kynde muſte
needes be nobler thanne the o-
ther,

cher. In the Scumppone kynde,
the best is the byrgyn Marye. in
the Masculyne, there arose none
greater thanne John Baptiste:
but howe farre doothe the holpe
byrgyn excelle hym, whiche (as
euerye Catholyke man knoweth)
was exalted aboue all the orders
of aungelles. Wyke wyse a man
maye reasonne. Of what kynde
the worst is worse than the worst
of an other kynde, that kynde is
lower than the other.

Nowe we knowe, that the most
vycious and worst of all creatu-
res, is a man, whether it be Ju-
das, that betrayd Christ, of whom
Christe sayth: It had bene good
for that man, yf he had not bene
borne: or whether any Antechrist
shal come hereafter, worse than he.

D. A. A. wht=

NOBILITIE OF

whychē shall be endowed with all
the power of Sathan . Howe o-
uer, holy writ sheweth many men
to be condemned to euerlastyng
tūment: but we rede in no place,
of any womanne so condemned .
Farther, as a witnesse to our pur-
pose, there is a certayne pꝛeroga-
tiue gyuen to the brutalle nature.
For the queene of all birdes, and
the most noble, is the Eagle, whi-
che is alway found of the female
kynde, and not of the masculyne.
Also this is clere, that the byrd of
Egypte, callid Fenix, wherof there
is neuer but one at oones, is a fe-
male. But contrary wyse, the ser-
pent Regulus, called also Basiliscus
the most pestilent of al venomous
beastes, is only masculine, of whi-
che kynde it is not possible to find
a female. Farther the excellencye
of

of this kynd, the verue & necessi-
 ty, is by these argumentes & reason-
 souns abundantly mough declared.
 For the begynnyng of all puelle
 comineth by men, and not by wo-
 men. Certaynely the fyrst man A-
 dam, boldely breakynge the com-
 maundement of god, dyd shut vp
 the gates of heauen, and made vs
 all subiectes to synne and deathe.
 For al we haue synned (and must
 dye) in Adam, not in Eua. whose
 fyrste begotten sonne opened hell
 gates. Man was fyrste enuious,
 fyrst a murderer, fyrste the sleat of
 his parentes, the fyrste dispayer
 of the mercy of god: the first that
 hadde two wyues, Lamech: the
 fyrste drunkarde Nohe: the fyrste
 that discouered the fylthynesse of
 his father, Nohes sonne Cham:
 the fyrst tyran and idolater Aem-
 D. v. both:

Gene. 3.

Gene. 4.

Gene. 9.

Gene. 10.

NOBILITIE OF

broth: the fyrste aduouterer: the
fyrst defowler of his kynswomen:
Men also fyrste made confedera-
cyes with synners, and inuented
cursed wythcraftes.

Gene. 37.

Exod. 1.

Gene. 19.

Certayne menne, the sonnes of
Jacob, fyrst solde theyr owne bro-
ther Joseph: Pharao, the Egyp-
tian, fyrste slewe chyldren. Men
fyrste synned ageynste Nature,
as wytnesse Sodoma and Go-
mora, the whyche souke for the
synnes of menne, somme tyme be-
yng most famous and noble cy-
ties. We rede in euery place, that
menne, for theyr easie voluptu-
ouse pleasure, hadde two wyues,
maie wyues, many lemmans:
they were aduouterers and forni-
catours. Of this sorte, that hadde
many wyues, many concubynes,
were Lamech, Abraham, Jacob,
Esau,

Esau, Joseph, Moses, Samson,
 Helcana, Saul, Dauid, Salo-
 mon, Aht, Hozan, Abia, Ca-
 leph, Assuerus, and innumerable
 other, the whiche had euery one,
 many wyues, harlottes, and con-
 cubines. Noz beyng contente to
 marye many, to fulfull theyr luste
 & pleasure, but also medled with
 their maydens. And we rede not,
 that any woman (except only Bat-
 sabba) was contente to haue any
 mo, but alway one husband. Noz
 ye shall not fynde, that anye wo-
 man married two husbādes, if she
 had a childe by her first husband.
 For women in cleynesse of liuing
 and chastitie, are farre moze con-
 tinent than men: the which (as we
 rede) bycause they were batreyne,
 haue absteyned from vyenge with
 theyr hui bandes, & haue brought

NOBILITIE OF

In other, to lye with their husban-
des, as Sara, Rachel, and many
other vnapt to generation, which
brought in their hande maydens,
that their husbandes myghte get
chyl dren to succede the. But what
man I pray you, were he neuer so
olde, colde, bareyn, and vnapt for
generation, was euer of so greate
pittie or myld stomake toward his
wyfe, that he wolde substitute an
other manne in his place, to solue
fruitefull sede in his wyues plen-
tifull gardeyne? And althoughe
we rede, that kyng Licurgus and
Solon made lawes in olde tyme.
that is to wyte, if any man beinge
ouer aged, vnniete for mariage,
or otherwise vnlusty to do the de-
des of Venus, had married a mai-
den, it shoulde be lausfull for his
wyfe, to chose a goodly, and a tall
younge

younge manne, to dalye and play
with her, and the chylde gotten
betwene theym, shoulde be ascri-
bed to her housbande, and not to
be called a bastarde: and though
those lawes were made and esta-
blyshed, yet we rede not, that they
were kepte, not so muche through
the sturdynesse of the men, as by
the chastitie of the womenne reu-
singe those lawes.

¶ There be innumerable excel-
lent women, whiche with notable
clennesse of lyfe, and perfet wue-
ly loue, haue farre passed al men:
as Abigail, the wyfe of Naball:
Arthemisia, the wyfe of Maus-
leus: Argia, the wyfe of Polici-
us, a Thebane. Julia, the wife of
Pompeius: Portia, the wyfe of
Cato: Cornelia the wife of Grac-
chus: Messalina, the wife of Sul-
pitius:

Arist. de a-
nima.

1. Cor. 1.

NOBILITIE OF

pice: Alceste, the wyfe of Adme-
 tus: Hypsicratea, the wife of Mi-
 thridates, kynge of Pontus: and
 also Dido, the buylder of Car-
 thage, and the Romayn Lucretia:
 and Sulpitia, the wyfe of Len-
 tulus. There be innumerable o-
 ther, whose hartes were so fixt
 on byrgynitie and chastitie, that
 the very dethe coulde not remoue
 theym: of whom the examples are
 manifest and playne: as Athlan-
 ta, Calidonia, Camilla, Voltea,
 Iphigenia of Grece, Cassandra,
 and Crise. With these gone the
 Virgynes of Lacedemonie, of
 Spartane, of Milesia, & of The-
 bes, with other innumerable, of
 whome the storyes of the Hebre-
 wes, of the Grekes, and of other
 Nacyons, doo make mencyon,
 the whyche esteemed byrgynitie a-
 boue

bonne kyngdomes, yea and aboute
theyr very lyues.

CIf the examples also of pitie
and louing kyndnes be required,
amonge al other Claudia Uesta-
liz towarde her father, and that
pooze yonge woman (of the whi-
che we spake afore) towardes her
mother, are wonderfull.

But here some enuious felow
wyl object against those thynges,
the headely mariages of Samp-
son, of Jason, of Deiphobus, of
Agamemnon, and such other tra-
gedies, on whych (as saythe the
prouerbe) if a man lye through-
ly, with clere eyes, he shall fynde,
that theyr wyues are falsely bla-
med, of the whych neuer chaun-
ced vnto a good man one yll. For
yll wyues neuer chaunce, but to
ylle husl andes : vnto whome all
though

NOBILITIE OF

though the good somtyme chāce,
yet their husbandes byces make
them naught.

If it had bene lausfull for wo-
men to make lawes, too wyte hi-
stories, how gret tragedies (trow-
pe) woldz they haue wryten of the
inestimable malice of men, amōg
whom many ben murtherers, the-
ues, raulshers of byrgins, periu-
rers, robbers, burners of houses,
traytours: of whome also, in the
tyme of Josue, & Dauid the king
so greatte a multitude were mur-
therers & robbers, that they were
able to make pꝛinces capytaynes
ouer thepꝛ companies. Yea and at
this day there is an infinite num-
ber of them. For all pꝛisong be fil-
led with men, and al the galowes
in euerye place be loded with the
carcasses of men. But contrarpe
wylle,

Iosue. 7.

2. Reg. 19.

3. Reg. 4.

wyse, womenne were the fyrste in-
uentours of all honest craftes: of
all vertue and benefittes. Whiche
thyng the very names of sciences
and vertues, beynge of the femy-
nine gender, do playnly specifye.
Whereof this is a notable pfofe;
that the circuite of the hole world
is callyd by the names of women:
that is to say of the Nymph, Asia;
of Europa, the doughter of Age-
nor, of Libia, the doughter of E-
paphus, the whiche is also callid
Aphrica. And finally to rectte all
kyndes of vertue, a woman shall
euery where obteyne the hygheste
place. For the vyrgin Mary was
a woman, the whiche fyrst dydde
bowe her vyrginitie to god, and
thereby deserued to be the mother
of god. The womenne prophetes
were euermooze inspyred with a
E more

NOBILITIE OF

more diuine spyrte, than the men,
whiche thynge is welle knowen,
by that Lactatius, Eusebius, and
Augustine wytnessen of the Si-
bylles.

Lacta. lib.
Insl.
Euf de sp.
Euangel.
August de
ci. del. 7.

Exod. 15.
4. reg. 22.
2. Para. 34

¶ So Mary, the syster of Mo-
ses prophecied: And whan Jere-
mye was taken prysoner, his vn-
cles daughter Olda, rose vp and
prophecied beyonde mans reache,
to the people of Israell, atte the
poynte redy to peryshe. Lette vs
serche holy scripture, and we shal
fynde, that women in constancye,
in fepthe, and in other vertues ac-
commended farre aboue men, as
in Judith, Ruth, Hester, the whi-
che with so great glozy and praisse
were celebrate and honored, that
holy bookes beare their names.

Rom. 4.
Genes. 15.
&. 21,

And all though Abraham, for the
stedfastnes of his fayth, is called.

In scripture a iuste man, by cause
he surely beleued in god: yet for al
that, he muste submit hym selfe to
his wyfe Sara. For by y^e voyce of
the lord he was comanded thus:
What so euer Sara saythe to the
here her voyce. So Rebecca, belea-
uyng stedfastly, went to aske god
certayne questions, and she being
reputed worthy, harde this oracle
or aunswere of god. Two maner
of folke are in thy bealy: and two
maner of people shall be deuyned
from thy bealy. And the wydowe
Sareptana gaue credence to He-
lias, all thoughe it were harde to
beleue that he tolde her. So za-
chary, rebuked of the aungell for
his incredulitte, was dumme: and
his wife Elizabeth, with her wōbe
and voyce prophesied: & is pray-
sed, because she beleued faithfully.

Gene. 25.

Luc. 1.

E. ii.

and

NOBILITIE OF

and she afterwarde, prayſed the
moſt bleſſed virgin mary, ſaying :
Bleſſed art thou, whyche dyddeſt
beleue thoſe thynges, that were
ſpoken to the of the lord. So Anna
the propheteſſe, after the reue-
lation of Simeon coſeſſed god, &
ſpake of him to al that wold here,
whyche looked for the redemption
of Iſrael. And Phylip had foure
vyrgins to his daughters, which
dyd prophesy. What ſhall I ſaye
of her the ſamaritan, with whom
Chriſte ſpake at the well : and be-
inge fedde with the faythe of this
beleuing womā, refuſed the meate
that the apoſtelles broughte : To
theſe may be ioyned the faithfull
woman of Chananee, and the wo-
man dyſeaſed with the bloudye
ſyre. Was not alſo the faith and
confeſſyon of Martha, lyke the

con=

Luc. 2.

Act. 21.

Ioan. 4.

Matt. 15.

Marc. 7.

Mat. 9.

Mar. 5.

Luc. 8.

Ioan. 11.

Matt. 16.

Luce. 7.

Ioan. 19.

Matt. 27.

Mar. 16.

& 17.

Luc. 23.
 & 24.
 Act. 18.

confessyon of Peter: The Gos-
 pell wytnesseth, howe greate con-
 stancy of faith was in Mary Mag-
 daleyn. For whyle the prestes and
 Jewes crucyfyed Christe, she we-
 peth, she bringeth oyntmentes br-
 to the Crosse, she seeketh in the
 Tombe, she asketh the gardyner
 for hym, she acknowledgeth god,
 she gothe to the apostels, and she-
 weth them, that he is risen. They
 were in doubte therof, but she be-
 leued it verily. Ageyn, what shall
 I saye, of that holy woman Pris-
 cilla, the whiche instructed Apol-
 lo, apostolycke man, perfytely ler-
 ned in the lawe, and byshoppe of
 the Corinthians: Nor it was no
 shame for a postell, to lerne of a
 woman, what he shulde teache in
 the church.

Moreover, they that haue she-

E.iii.

wed

NOBILITIE OF

2. Mach. 7.

wed the stedfastnes of theyr faith
by sufferynge of Martyrdom, and
by the dyspyng of deathe, be no
fewer in number than men. Noz
that wonderfull mother shuld be
lesse vnspoken of, so worthy to be
remembred, the whiche not onely
behelde her. vii. sonnes putte to
deathe, by most cruell martyrdom
but also she boldly exhorted them
stedfastlye to dye. And she aboue
all thynges trustyng in god, was
after her chylderne cruelly put to
deathe, for the mayntenaunce of
the lawes of her countrey.

¶ Dyd not also Theodelina, the
doughter of the kynge of Baua-
rians, conuerte the Lumbardes
to the fayth. And Ercisilla, the
syster of Henry the fyrste Empe-
rour, conuerte the Hungarians.
¶ Clotildis, the daughter of the
kynge

kyng of Burgundia, conuert the
frenche men : And a certayn wo
man called Apostola, of a lowe de
gree, conuerted the Hiberians.

Eche of them turned innumera-
ble people vnto Christis faythe.

And fynally, this is the onely and
spectall relygious kynd, in whom
vnto this day the catholike faith,
and the continual workes of ver-
tue and goodnesse doo flouryshe
and thynne.

But to the ende that noo man
shuld doubt women to be as able
to doo all those thynges that men
can, let vs handle the matter with
examples : and we shal fynd, that
there was neuer noble nor wor-
thy acte, in any kynde of vertue,
doone by men, but that as noble
hath ben done by women. In do-
inge sacrifyce, as the paynyms in

E.iii. olde

NOBILITIE OF

olde tyme vsed, Melyssa Cibeles
 was the Mynyster, after whose
 name, the other Goddesses, that
 vsed the priestes offyce, were cal-
 lyd melyssa. Also Hyppecaustria
 was Mineruas mynyster, Hera
 of Venus, Iphiginia of Diana.
 And the mynysters of Bacchus,
 were very notable, as Thyades,
 Menades, Bacche, Eliades, Mi-
 mallonides, Conides, Eubiades,
 Bassarides, Triaterides. Also a-
 monge the Jewes, Mary Moses
 syster, entred with Aaron into the
 Sanctuarie, and was taken as a
 mynyster oz priest. And although
 women be forbydden in our rel-
 gion, to vse the order of presthod
 yet it appereth by hystories, that a
 woman on a tyme by counterfai-
 tynge her kynde, was bishoppe of
 Rome. There haue bene in Chri-
 stis

Sanctua-
 ry, a place
 consecrate
 oz halo:
 wed.

his churche, many abbasses and nunnes, whiche in olde tyme menr disdayned not to calle holy mynisters. There haue bene among all nations, that excelled in prophecienge, as Cassandra, the Sybilles, Mary Moyles sister, Delbo-
ra, Holda, Anna, Elyzabeth, the foure daughters of Philip, & many other holy womē of later time, as Brigida and Heldegardis.

Furthermoze, in the inuyn cible arte magyke, whether it came of good spirytes or bad. Circes and Medea wroughte farre greater wonders than Zoroastes hym self whiche as many suppose, was the fyrste fynder of the sayde science. Moze ouer in phyllosophye, many haue ben very excellent, as Theano the wyfe of Pythagoras, and Dama his daughter was ryghte
E. v. famous

NOBILITIE OF

famous, in openynge and declaring her fathers obscure & darke sentences. Also Aspasia and Diotima, Socrates scholars, & Mantinea and Philesia Ariochta, both scholars to Plato. Finally Plotinus highly prayseth Gemina and Amphiclea, Lactantius Themisten. Christis church reioyceth in saynt Caterine, which being but a lyttell mayde, dyd farre passe in lernynge, the wyse menne of that tyme.

Let vs not forget in this place the queene Zenobia, scholar to the phylosopher Longinus, whiche for her great vertue and cunning was called Ephemissa, whose holy workis Nichomachus translated into Greke.

Let vs speake of the oratours arte, and of poetrie. Behold here cometh

comineth Arnesia, Iurna med An-
 drogeneia, Hortentia, Lacera, Va-
 leria, Coptola, Sapho, Corinna,
 Cornificia the Romayne, Erym-
 na, Celia, or Thesbia, whych
 was named an Epigrammatist,
 in Saluste Semprouia, in the
 law ciupl Calphurnia: And were
 it not, that women in our tyme ar
 forbydden, to gyue theym to good
 lernynge, we shulde euen nowe,
 haue women moze excellēt in wyt
 and lernynge than menne. What
 shulde we hercof say, that women
 onely by nature are sene to excelle
 the very artificers in all sciences?
 Doo not the Grammarians take
 vppon theym, to be the maysters
 of eloquence? And that do we far
 better lerne of oure naurces and
 mothers, than of the Grammari-
 ans. Dyd not Cornelia fourne
 and

NOBILITIE OF

and falshyon the tongues of her
 moste eloquent sonnes Gracchi:
 Dyd not Iſtrineus mother, teach
 Syles the sonne of Aripithus,
 kynge of Scythia, the Greeke
 tongue? Dydde not the chylzen
 bozne of theym that were sente to
 inhabyte in straunge countreyes,
 alway obserue and kepe theyr mo-
 thers tongue, amonge strangers?
 Surely for none other cause Pla-
 to and Quintilian so diligentely
 ordeyned a mete and conueniente
 nource for chylterne to be chosen,
 but that the chylternes tongue &
 speche myght be ryghtlye and dis-
 cretely fourmed.

¶ But nowe, be not the poetes in
 theyr trifles & fables, & the logiti-
 ans in their cōtentious talking o-
 uercome of women: Ther was ne-
 uer oratour so good or so happy,
 that

that in perswasyon coulde get the
upper hande of an harlot: what
arithmetrician by false recknyng;
coulde deceyue a woman in paye-
ment of her det: or what musittian
can compare with a woman in sin-
gynge and swetenesse of breaſte:
Be not these Philoſophers, these
astrologians, in theyr diuynatiōs
& for knowleges many tymes infe-
riours to the cōūtrei wiues: yea &
very oft tymes a ſely olde woman
excelleth the phisitian: Socrates
hym ſelfe (aboue all other reckned
the moſt wyſe man) being very a-
ged, dyd not diſdain to be taught
of the womā Aspasia. Lyke as A-
pollo, a man ſo wel lerned in Chri-
ſtis doctrine, was not aſhamed to
be taught of the womā Priſcilla.
¶ Nowe for prudence, you maye
take for examplers thoſe women.

Opis

NOBILITIE OF

we shulde not forget Abigail and Bathsaba, of whiche two Abigail delyuered her husbände, from the wrathe of Dauid, and after the death of her husbände she was queene and wyfe of Dauid. The other, the mother of Salomon, by her prudence opteyned, that her sonne was kynge.

¶ More ouer, in the Inuention of thynges, Isis, Minerva, Nicotratra, be examples. In rulyng of realmes, and buyldynge of cities women excelle: Semiramis was the souerayne gouernour of the vniuersall worlde: Dido was the buylder and queene of Carthage: the Amazones were moste worthy in warre and polytyke in peace. In the bolde byckerynges of battayle, what a woman was Thomiris the queene of Massageta-

getaries: She ouercame Cyrus
the gret conquerour and puissant
kynge of Persians. Also Camil-
la, of the Moltians, and Alaisca
of Boheme, were two most migh-
ty queenes. We rebe of many o-
ther moste noble women, whych
by theyr wonderfulle power and
polycie, in moste extremyte, and
whan there was no hope of helpe
loked for, recouered theyre coun-
trei, and restored it to wealthe a-
geyne. Amonge whome is Iu-
dith, whych saynt Jerome hygh-
lye prayseth with these wordes:
Take Iudith the wydoure, the ex-
ample of chastite, deuote her with
triumphant prayse and perpetual
commendation. For god gaue her
to be an example, not only for wo-
men, but also for men to folowe,
whiche for a rewarde of her cha-
stite,

· N O B I L I T I E O F ·

Opis for her wysedome counted a
goddesse: Plotina wyfe of Etota-
nus the imperour: Amalasuntha,
the queene of Ostrogottes: Eui-
lia the wyfe of Scipio: with whō
reken Delboza, the wyfe of La-
bidoth, a meruaylouse wyfe wo-
man, whiche (as we rede in Judi-
cum) was a certayn tyme Judge
ouer the people of Israell, and the
chyldeerne of Israell came vp to
her for iudgement in all causes.

And whan Barach refused to go
ageynste their enemies, excepte
she wolde go with hym, Delboza
was chosen capitayne of the host
of Israell: and slepyng and dys-
comfyrng theyr foes, she retur-
ned home with victorie.

4. Reg. 2. ¶ More ouer, it is redde in the
2. Par. 22. fourth booke of kingis, that quene
Attalia reigned, & was souerayne

Judge

Judge in Ierusalem scuen yeres
 space. And Semiramis, after the
 deathe of kynge Ninus, iudged
 the people .xl. yeres. And all the
 quenes of Ethiope, called Can-
 daces, were moſte wyſe, and reig-
 ned moſte myghtely: of whomit
 is wrytten in the actes of the apo-
 ſtels. And meruaylouse thyngeſ
 of them ſpeaketh the faithful wry-
 ter of antyquytte Joſephus. Alſo
 Nicanor, the quene of Saba, cam
 from the ende of the world, to here
 the wyſedome of Salomon, and
 as Chriſt witneſſeth, ſhe ſhall con-
 demne all the people of Hieruſa-
 lem. And there was a certain wiſe
 woman of Thecoa, whyche con-
 cluded kynge Dauids demaunde
 with a queſtion, with a ryddle ſhe
 taught hym; and by the exāple of
 god, ſwaged his wyath. No: here
 we

Act. 8.

Ioſ. li. aut.

3. Reg. 10.

2. Paral. 9.

Matt. 12.

Luce. 11.

2. Reg. 14.

1. Reg. 25.

3. Reg. 1.

NOBILITIE OF

Attie, armed her with suche vertue, that she vanquished him that was invincible to all menne, and subdued hym, that no man coulde overcome.

2. Reg. 20. **I** Further, we reade, that a certayn wise woman called vnto her Joab the capitayne, and deliuered into his handes the heade of Siba, the enemye of Dauid, to the intente to saue the citie Abela, from destruction, whiche was the chiefe citie of Isracc. And a certayne woman, threw a piece of a myl stone vpon Abimelechs head

Judic. 9. and brake his brayne panne, executinge the vengeance of god vpon Abimelech, because he hadde done yll befoze god agaynst his father, in sleinge. lxx. of his brether vpon one stone.

Hest. 7. 8. **S**o Hester, the wyfe of kynge Assuer

Assuer, not only deliuered her people from the moste shamesfull death but also made theyn ryght honorable.

¶ Iohanne Coztolanus with the Volscians, had besieged Rome, & soo sharply assayled it, that the Romaynes were not able to defende themselves agaynste hym: an auncient woman Veturia his mother, soo handled the mattier, that she ouercame his rage and furye, and reconcyled hym ageyn to the Romaynes. Arthemisia, whan the Rhodians came fiercly vpon her, both dissapoynted them of theyr nauye of shyppes, and conquered that Ilande, and sette vp her Image within the citie of Rhodes, as a perpetuall note of infamy vnto them.

¶ Howe moche doo the Frenche
F.ii. men

NOBILITIE OF

Anno dñi
1428.

men prayse a yonge damsell, whiche beynge descended of a lowe lineage, toke vpon her after the manner of the Amazons, to leade the forwarde of the army: & she fought so valiantly, and hadde soo good chaunce, that the French men beleued verily, that by her prowesse, they recouered the reline of France out of the Englyshe mens handes: And therfore, to the perpetuall remembrance of her, they made an ymage of a mayden to be sette vpon in Dyltaunce on the brydge ouer the ryuer of Aiger or Loier. I coulde yet reherce out of the histories of the Grekes, of the Latines, and other barbarous nations innumerable mooste excellent women, but to the ende this worke shulde not be to greate a volume, I studyed to be breese. For Plutarche

tarche, Valerius, Bocattius, and many other haue writtē the praise of noble women: And therfoze I haue spokē but lytel of their praises, but ouer passed verye manye thynges. For why, I am not so presumptuous, to thynke my selfe able, to cōprehend in few wordes, y infynite nobylities & vertues of womē. For who is able thzoughly and perfectly to recyte the infinite praises of women, of whome we take all oure lyfe and substaunce, and in whome is all the conseruation of mankynde, the whyche els shulde peryshe and decay in short tyme: on whome also euery familye and common welthe dependeth: This thyng was well known to the buylder of Rome, whiche bycause he lacked women, raiuyshed and caried away the Sa-

I.iii. vines

lines daughters, not doubtinge
the cruel warre that shuld folowe
thervpon. For he knewe, that su-
che an empire wolde in short time
perishe, yf they wanted women.

¶ And at laste, whan the Cappytoll
was taken by the Sabynes, and
that in the myddes of the market
place, they foughte moste cruellye
hande to hande, with the sodayne
runnynge of the women betwene
bothe the hostes, the battayle ces-
sed: and at the laste a peace being
made, and a truce taken, they con-
cluded a perpetual amitie. For the
whych cause Romulus registred
these womens names in the cour-
tes and courte rolles. And it was
by the Romaynes assente decreed
and wrytten in the common ta-
bles, that women shuld not grind
at the quyzne, nor dyudge in the
kychen

kitchen: noꝝ the husbände shulde
 not say: wife, I giue the this: noꝝ
 the wyfe: Husbände, I gyue you
 this: bycause they shulde knowe,
 that euey thyng betwene theym
 was cōmon. And hereof at length
 grewe a custom, that whan y new
 wedded wyfe was brought home,
 she wolde saye: vbi tu, ego, that is
 where you be lord, I am ladye:
 where you be maister, I am may-
 stresse. Moreover, great honours
 tokens of high reuerence and di-
 gnitie were done to women by de-
 cree of the Senatours, as these:
 that in the way they shulde go on
 the vpper hande: and that men
 shuld ryse on their sete vnto them
 & gyue them place. Furthermore,
 it was graunted theym, to weare
 purple garmentes, embrowded
 about with gold, ornaumentes dec-
ked.

NOBILITIE OF

ked with pꛑecyous stones, rynges
at theyꝝ eares, & chaynes of golde
about theyꝝ neckes. And it was at
the last decreed by the emperours
lawes, that as ofte as any statute
was made in any place, foꝛbyd-
ding oznaementes oꝛ apparayle to
be woꝛne, women shoulde not be
comꝛehended vnder that lawe.
Also it was granted theym, to re-
ceyue herytage and succession of
goodes, & the funerals of women
to be celebꝛate and honourablye
kepte, as the funeralles of noble
men were. Foꝛ why on a time whā
a gyfte shoulde be sente to Apollo
Delphicus, as Camillus had bo-
wed, and that there was not soo
moche golde in the cytie: the wo-
men of theyꝝ owne good wylls,
bꝛought in the iewelles and ozna-
mentes of theyꝝ bodieꝝ.

And

And in the warre that Cyrus made agaynst Astiages, the Persians armye was by the castygation of women repzehended, and being newly restozed againe, opeyned a right worthy byctorye. For the whiche dede Cyrus made a lawe, that kynges of the Persians entrynge into the cytie, shuld paye to euerye woman a piece of golde. The whiche thynge also kynge Alexander, entrynge twyse into that citie payd twyse. Ye and moze ouer, he commaunded the gyft to be doubled to women with chylde. So from the moste auncient kynges of the Persyans and Romaynes, yea from the very begynnynge of the citie of Rome and empire, women were hadde in all hygh honour and reuerence: and the very emperours theym selues esteemed

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esteemed theym moſte highly. For
 Juſtynian the emperour, in ma-
 kyng of lawes, thoughte it con-
 ueniente, to haue the counſaylle
 and aduylſe of his wyfe. And in
 an other place, the law ſayth, that
 the wyfe ſhyneth in the honour of
 her hufbande, and the brightnes
 of his dignitie beautifieth her, for
 the higher the huſband is aduan-
 ced in honour, the higher is his
 wyfe. Soo the Emperours wyfe
 is callid empreſſe, the kingis wiſe
 quene, the princis wyfe, the prin-
 ceſſe: and is therby enobled, howe
 lowe ſo euer ſhe be of byrthe. And
 Alpian the lawyer ſayth. A prince
 that is to ſaye, the Emperoure or
 kynge, is aboue the lawes, and al-
 though the empreſſe is bonde by
 the lawes, yet the emperour frely
 granteth her as great priuileges
 as

as he hath hym selfe. wherfoze it
is permitted unto noble women,
to iudge, to arbytrate and decyde
matters, to doo and take homage
and fealtie, to keepe courtes, and
mynyster Iustyce amonge theyr
tenautes. And for this pur-
pose, the woman may haue coue-
nant seruautes of her owne, as
well as the man may: and a wo-
manne may be iudge, yea amonge
straungers. She maye also gyue
name to her familie and kynred:
so that the chyldren shalbe named
after their mother, and not after
their father. And in dyuerse pla-
ces of the lawecyuple, womenne
haue, touchynge theyr doweries,
many great priuileges graunted
them. Where amonge other thyn-
ges it is ordeyned, that a woman
of good name and fame, shall not
be

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be imprysoned for dette, and the Judge, that comynetteth her to pryson, shall lose his heed. If she be suspected of any faute, she shall be putte into a monasterye or secrete place, or elles be delyuerid to womē, to be imprysoned by them. For the lawe saythe, A woman is of better state and condition than a man: and also in one selfe kynd of offence, the manne trespasseth moze than the woman. Wherfoze the man taken in auoutrie, loseth his heed: but the woman aduouterer is put into a monasterye.

Also the Lawyer gethereth mo prouiledges for the womenne in his Summe and bryefe Annotation vpon the title named, Ad Senatus consultum uelleianum, & Speculator vpon the title De renuntiationibus.

¶ Also the auncyente lawe mak-
berg

tees and stablyshers of common
wealthes, the mooste graue, wyse,
and prudent menne, Aicurgus I
say, and Plato, knowynge verie
welle by the secretes of Phyloso=
phy, that women were not inferi=
ours to men, neyther in excellen=
ce of mynde, nor in strengthe of
bode, nor in dygnitie of Nature,
but lyke able vnto all thynges,
decreed and made lawes, that wo=
men shoulde exercise suche may=
stries as men vsed, yea all feates
perteynyng to the warre, in the
bolwe, in the slynge, in hurlynge
of stones, in shotynge, in fygh=
tyng in armour, as toell on hors
backe as on foote, in prychnge of
tentres, in settynge men in arraye.
and couductynge of an hoste: and
to be bryefe, they ordeyned, that
women shuld as comonly as men
vse

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vse all maner exercyses. Lette vs
 rede wyters of antiquitte, worthy
 to be beleued, and we shall fynde,
 that in Getulia, Bactris, and Gal
 letta, the maner was, that meinne
 gaue them selves to ease and Deli
 cacy, and the women to plow and
 tylle the ffieldes, to buylde, to bye
 and sel, to ryde, to go on warfare,
 and to do all other thynges, wht
 che nowe amonge vs the men do.
 Amonge the Cantabrians, men
 gaue dowerye to the women, bre
 therne wete gyuen to marriage by
 theyr sisters, daughters were ap
 poynted to be heires. Amonge the
 Scythians, the Thracians, and
 French menne, all worthy dedes
 were as cōmonly done by women
 as by men, and in matters concer
 nyng warre and peace, women
 were called to councele, to gyue
 theyr

they? aduylse and sentence. Whiche
thyng the Cerce that the Celtes
made with Hanniball, dothe well
declare to be trewe, by these woꝝ:
des: If any of the Celtes com-
playne, to haue had wronge of a-
ny of the Carthaginences: of that
thing let the rulers & officers of
Carthaginences, or els the cap-
taynes which shal be in Spayne,
be iudges: If any of the Cartha-
ginences hath hadde any wronge
done hym, by anye of the Celtes,
lette the women of the Celtes be
iuges, and determyne that thyng.
But by the great tyranny of men,
preuaylyng against the lawes of
god and nature, such libertie was
gyuen to women.

¶ Thou wylte saye, that is now
forbydden by lawes, abolished by
custome, extincted by education.

¶ For

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For anon as a woman is borne euen from her infancy, she is kept at home in ydelnes, & as though she were vnnete for any hygher busynesse, she is pmitted to know no farther, than her nedle and her threedde. And than whan she cometh to age, able to be married; she is delyuered to the rule and gouernance of a telous husband, oz els she is perpetually shutte vp in a close nourrye. And all offyces belonging to the common weale, be forbydden theym by the lawes. For it is not permitted to a woman, though she be very wise and prudent, to pleade a cause before a Iuge. Furthermoze, they be repelled in iurisdiction, in arbitrement, in adoption, in intercession, in procuracion, oz to be gardeyns oz tutours, in causes testamētary

and

and criminall. Also they be repel-
 led frome preachynge of goddes
 worde, agaynst expresse and playn
 scripture, in whych the holy gost
 promised vnto them by Iohel the
 prophet, sayng: And your daugh-
 ters shall propheticke and preache:
 lyke as they taught openly in the
 tyme of the apostels: as it is well
 knowen, that Anna the wydowe
 of Symeon, the daughters of
 Phylipp, and Discilla, the wyfe of
 Aquila dydde. But the vnworthy
 dealing of the later lawe makers
 is so great, that breakyng goddes
 commaundemente, to stablyshe
 theyr owne traditions, they haue
 pronounced openlye, that women
 otherwyse in excellency of nature,
 dignitie, and honour most noble,
 be in condicion more hyle than all
 men: And thus by these lawes,

Iohel. 2.

G the

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the women being subdued as they were by force of armes, are constrained to giue place to men, and to obeye theyr subdewers, not by no naturall, no diuine necessitie or reason, but by custome, education, fortune, and a certayne tyrannicall occasion.

¶ Furthermore, there be somme men, whypche by relygion, clayme authoritie ouer women, and they proue theyr tyranny by holy scripture: the whiche haue this cursed sayenge, spoken to Eue, continually in theyr mouth: Thou shalt be vnder the power of man, and he shall haue lordeshyp ouer the. But yf it be answered vnto them, that Christe toke awaye that cursed sayenge: they wyll obiecte agayne the wordes of Peter, with whome Paule agreeth, sayenge:
 Lette

Genes. 2.

2. Pet. 3.

Ad col. 3.

Ad eph. 5.

Lette women be in subiection of
theyr husoandes. Lette women in
the churche kepe silence. But he
that knoweth the dyuers sygures
of Scripture, and the effectes of
the same, shall soone se, that these
thynges be not repugnant but in
the rynde. For this is the order in
the churche, that men in ministra-
tion shall be preferred before wo-
men: lyke as the Jewes in pro-
myssion are before the Greeces:
yet neuerthelesse God is not accep-
ter of persones. For in Christ nei-
ther male nor female is of value,
but a newe creature. And manye
thynges were permitted vnto me,
for the hardenesse and crueltie of
theyr hartes agaynst women: as
in times past diuorces were gran-
ted vnto the Jewes, whiche for al
that nothyng hurteth the dignitie

Rom. 2.
Act. 10.

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of

NOBILITIE OF

of women: But whan men com-
mytte offence and erre, the women
haue power of Iudgement ouer
theym, to the great shame and re-
buke of menne. And that quene
Saba shall iudge the men of Je-
rusalem. Therfoze they, whyche
beyng iustified by fayth: are be-
come the sounes of Abraham, the
chylde of promise, be
subdewd to a woman, and bound-
den by the cōmandement of god,
sayenge to Abraham: what is e-
uer Sara saith vnto the, folow it.

C Nowe at laste, bryefely to recol-
lecte, fyrste, I haue shewed the
great excellency of womankynd,
by her name, order, place, and mat-
ter, and what greate dignitie she
hath obtained of god aboue man:
farther I haue declared it by re-
lygion, nature, humayne lawes,
by

Gen. 21.
Gen. 21.

Gene. 21.

by diuers authorities, reason and
examples, inpyngling one with an
other. And yet haue I not so mo-
che sayd, but that I haue left mo-
che moze buspoken. For neyther
Ambition, nor the cause of myne
owne commendation, but my du-
tie and the very truthe moued me
to wyte: lest that I, as one com-
mytyng sacrifice (holdynge my
peace) shuld seme priuily to steale
and brybe away by a certayn wyc-
ked silence, from so noble a kynde,
the laudes and praises due to it,
as it were, burienge in the ground
the talente that god hath gyuen
me. But yf anye man moze cury-
ous than I, shal fynde any argu-
ment or reason, that hath escaped
me, whyche he thynketh worthy
to be added to this my booke, I
woll not recker my selfe blamed,
but

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but rather holpen thereby, in that
this my worke, by his wytte
and counnyng, he wolle
make better. There-
fore lesse this
worke shuld
growe to
ouer

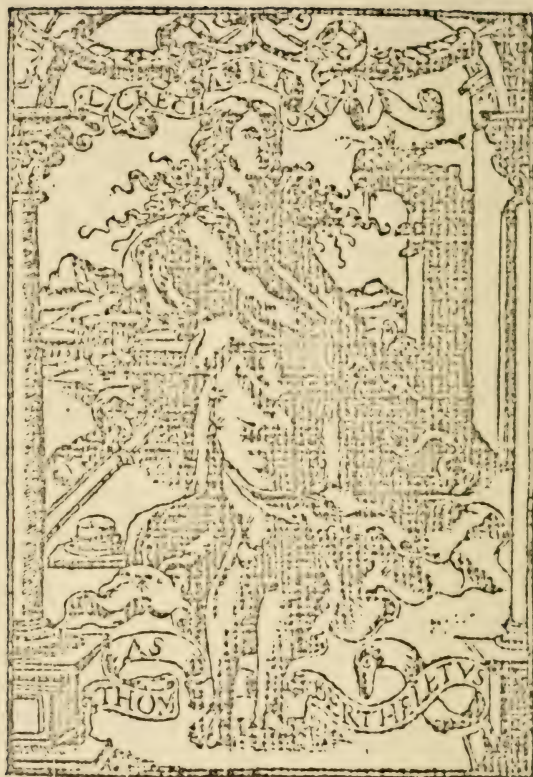
great a volume, here

I make an ende

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